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Title:Regarding need to protect and preserve the number of Ponies in Manipur for equestrian sports.

DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (INNER MANIPUR): Sagol Kangjei is the mother of modern game of Polo. In Manipuri terms, Sagol means pony/ horse. 'Kangjei' means a polo stick. It is used by the players mounted on ponies for playing the game and hitting a white ball (Kangdrum) made of bamboo root. Polo has, been a game patronised by the royalty and the upper crust of society, not only in India but abroad. In Manipur, it has always been a game for common man. The antiquity of Polo in Manipur is shrouded amidst cobwebs of myths and rituals. Ponies figure prominently in Manipur mythology and have an undeniable presence in the social life of Manipur: Born in obscurity, spotted by civilization, Polo became a World sports by proxy. Though this majestic game had always been an integral part of the Manipuri ethos, it was the Britishers who actually gave it a place in the world.

The Polo game is played on horseback between two teams of four players each on a grass field and between two goal posts. It is the oldest of equestrian sports. The prominent patrons of the game were King Kyamba and King Khagemba (1597-1672 AD.) and King Chandra Kirti (1850 - 1886 AD.). The latter, especially, is to be credited with popularising the sport in other parts of the world.

The Guinness Book of Records in its 1991 edition on page 288 writes "Polo: Origins: Origins of Polo can be traced to origins in Manipur State 3100 B.C. when it was played as Sagol Kangjei". The earliest club was the Cachar Club founded in 1859 in Assam, India. The oldest Polo Club in the world still in existence is the Calcutta Polo Club (1862).

The Manipur Polo International has recently conducted the 9^{th} edition of its tournament in the oldest pologround, Mapal Kangjeibung at Imphal during the Manipur Mega Tourism Festival- the Sangai Festival.

I urge the Union Government and Ministry of youth Affairs and Sports in particular to assist the state government of Manipur to protect and preserve the ever decreasing number of ponies in Manipur and at the same time promote this oldest equestrian sports in all its full glory.